

316 OFFICER RESPONSE TO CALLS

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations.

316.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Officers responding to an emergency call shall proceed immediately. Officers shall continuously sound the siren and operate emergency lighting equipment unless doing so would endanger the safety of others.

Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve officer of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property and does not protect the officer from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not generally provide an exemption from the vehicle laws (§ 300.100.4, RSMo). Even with the activation of emergency equipment officers should not exceed the posted speed limit by more than 20 miles per hour.

Officers should only respond to a call as an emergency response when responding to circumstances the officer reasonably believes involves the potential for immediate danger to persons. Officers not responding to a call as an emergency response shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren (§ 300.095, RSMo; § 304.022.5(1), RSMo).

316.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Officers may request emergency assistance when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent harm to a citizen.

If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify Public Safety Joint Communications.

316.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary and effectively close to the incident location should respond to a call with an emergency response. The Watch Commander or the field supervisor should monitor all emergency responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

316.4 INITIATING EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE

If an officer believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify Public Safety Joint Communications of his/her response and current location.

316.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONDING OFFICER

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to a call with an emergency response.

The decision to continue as an emergency response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify Public Safety Joint Communications. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

The first officer arriving at an emergency response scene should determine whether to increase or reduce the level of the response and notify Public Safety Joint Communications of their determination. Any subsequent change in the appropriate response level should be communicated to Public Safety Joint Communications.

316.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the Watch Commander or the field supervisor shall verify the following:

1. The proper response has been initiated.
2. No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
3. Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practicable.

The field supervisor shall, whenever practicable, monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units to be assigned an emergency response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in his/her judgment is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize an emergency response, the Watch Commander or the field supervisor should consider the following:

- The type of call or crime involved
- The necessity of a timely response
- Traffic and roadway conditions

- The location of the responding units

316.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the officer must terminate the emergency response and continue accordingly.

The officer shall notify the Watch Commander, field supervisor or Public Safety Joint Communications of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.